

BABYLON IN RETROSPECT.

ANY MAN'S LIFE.

I NICHT dae waur than bide here a' my days,
 Whaur a' thing's aye, year in year oot, the same;
 Amang kent fowk, trailin' upon kent braes,
 I nicht dae waur than settle doon at hame.

To live content wi' little, kennin' weel
 That this world's gear is coft wi' muckle care;
 To hae a change o' claes, a puckle meal,
 And peace o' mind—what needs a body mair?

To howk the grund whaur ance my forbears swat,
 To see the kirk-yaird whaur some day I'll rest;
 Wha kens but mebbe some sic wey as that
 Wad gar me trow that a' thing's for the best?

It scunners me to think I'll hae to face
 Ance mair the senseless trokes I've left ahent;
 For in that clorty, smeeky, godless place
 There's naething that can gie a man content.

Wae's me to think on't, but your weary feet
 May wander up and doon a hail year through;
 And never in the towmond will you meet
 A chield that's sib to ane that's sib to you.

ALEXANDER GRAY.

coft, bought.
howk, dig.
trow, feel sure.
scunners, disgusts.

trokes, potterers.
towmond, year.
sib, akin.

PERSUASION.

“HASTE ye to the window, Jean,
For a lanely man am I.
Let me see your bonny een
Keekin’ oot as I gae by.
No ilka chield wad come sae far
To hear your Mither’s host’s nae waur.”

“Tammas, I’ve a heap to dae;
Bread to bake and claes to mend.
Gin I hark to a’ you say,
Gude kens whan the wark ’ll end;
But since you’re there, I micht as weel
Be ceevil to a neebour chiel’.”

“Jeannie, lass, come doon the stair;
I canna crack unless you’re near.
There’s lots a body disna care
To tell a lass, when fowk may hear.
I wat you mak an unco phraise
O’ bakin’ bread and mendin’ claes.”

“Tammas, you’ve nae mense ava;
You’re but an orra wanderin’ loon.
You think that when you gie a ca’,
I’ll leave my wark and hurry doon.
I ken you’ve nocht to say to me;
But, still an’ on, I’ll come and see.”

“ Jeannie, let’s gae up the hill;
 We’ll see the mune rise, by and by,
 It’s fine at nicht, when a’ thing’s still,
 To hear the corn-craiks in the rye.
 Lassie, think o’ a’ you miss.
 Indoors in sic a nicht as this.”

“ Tammas, wha can eat brent bread?
 You ken yoursel’ it’s far frae richt;
 But losh be here, it is indeed
 A maist byordinar’ bonny nicht.
 Forbye, it’s no that mighty late;
 You’re no far wrang; the wark can wait.”

ALEXANDER GRAY.

ilka, every.
crack, talk.
phraise, fuss.
mense, common sense.

loon, lad.
brent, burned.
orra, odd.

DISQUIET.

WHATEVER brocht me hame?
There's naething juist the same.
The trees are a' blawn doon
About the big fairm toon;
What ance was lown and fair
Is noo sae cauld and bare.
I wander a' my lane
Wi' tear begrutten een,
Up by the auld Kirkyaird,
And think hoo few are spared.
O, it is sair to tine
The friends o' auld lang syne.
The place is grown that sma',
The auld fowk are awa'.
There's naething juist the same,
I've been ower lang at hame.

ALEXANDER GRAY.

lown, sheltered.*begrutten*, tear stained.

DECEMBER GLOAMING.

IN the cauld dreich days when it's nicht on the back
 o' four,
 I try to stick to my wark as lang as may be;
 But though I gang close by to the window and
 glower,
 I canna see.

But I'm sweir, rale sweir, to be lichtin' the lamp that
 early;
 And aye I wait whiles there's ony licht i' the sky.
 Sae I sit by the fire and see there mony a ferly
 Till it's mirk oot-by.

But it's no' for lang that I sit there, daein' naething;
 For it's no' like me to be wastin' my time i' the dark;
 Though your life be toom, you can aye thank God
 for ae thing,—
 There's aye your wark.

But it wadna be wark I wad think o', if you were
 aside me.
 I wad dream by the ingle neuk, wi' never a licht;
 The glint o' your een wad be licht eneuch to guide
 me
 The hail forenicht.

I wadna speak, for there's never nae sense in
 speakin';
 By the lowe o' the fire I wad look at your bonny hair.
 To ken you were near wad be a' that my her't wad
 be seekin'—
 That and nae mair.

ALEXANDER GRAY.

dreich, wearisome.
sweir, loth.
ferly, marvel.
mirk, dark.

ingle neuk, corner by the fire.
the hail forenicht, interval
 between twilight and bedtime.
lowe, glow.

CHRISTMAS GREETING.

IN the back o' the year, when your thochts are on us,
Oors are on you.

It's a lang, dreich, waesome, wearisome road
Sinders us noò.

Wha hasna freends that hae wandered awa?—
God, mighty few!

But, still an' on, it's real couthy to sit
By the ingle and crack;

And we daff and we joke, though there's mebbe a
he'rt

That's maist like to brak.

Here's to you, lads, whaurever you are,
And, O, haste ye back!

ALEXANDER GRAY.

dreich, wearisome.
couthy, pleasant.

crack, talk.
daff, to be gay.